
German Cover Revisited

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As an American living in Germany, I read with interest the article in the January edition of the *Perfins Bulletin* about submarine mail. My comments are taken from my handwritten notes written in a hurry, and difficult even for me to read.

I suggest that a better translation would be: censorship was arranged in their home region (instead of "outside of").

EF means single stamp franking.

Brief der 2. Gewichtsstufe means letter of the second weight step. The first weight step was 20 grams and cost 20 Pfennig. The second and following steps were 10 grams each and cost 10 Pfennig each.

"...trotzdem in Bremen nochmals zensiert mit seltenerem Zensur- stempel 'X' ." I cannot see anything on the illustration which could be an alleged rarely-seen censor mark X.

The Bremen cancel is not a censor marking. It is the cancel of the submarine mail processing office, applied prior to return to sender.

"... mit Firmenlochung, Bedarfsfehler means with perfin, improper usage. I doubt that, because the pre-printed envelope indicates business correspondence. It was either supplied by the addressee to a firm with which it had regular dealings or it was printed by the sender for one of its frequent correspondents. If the user of the perfin agrees with the sender of the letter, there can be no question as to its proper usage. If

there is no agreement, then it may be an improper usage.

The 3-line stamp reads *Zurück/Wegen Einstellung des Tauchboot-/ briefverkehrs zurück an Absender* (Return/Due to discontinuance of submarine/postal service return to sender).

Tauchb. Gebühr erstattet means submarine fee refunded. This fee was probably paid in cash in addition to the postage .

Since the US did not enter the war until April 6, 1917, it is reasonable that letters cancelled in January were intended for submarine mail.

There is a book by Klaus Geissler with the title "U-200 Deckname 'Die Tauchbootpost' 1916-1917" There was a one-page article by Peter Fischer in the December edition of *Briefmarken Spiegel* entitled "Über den Atlantik im deutschen U-Boot." It illustrates 3 covers: an official letter cancelled 13.12.15 marked "Via U-Boot Deutschland (U-200)", an Austrian Letter with the Bremen return stamp 20.1.17, and a German letter with the Bremen return stamp 18.1.17.

Apparently, the U-200 made two successful round trips with mail, and probably cargo. The planned third trip was cancelled in January 1917, probably due to the deteriorating political situation.

The U-Boot "Bremen" sailed with mail on its maiden voyage on 24 August 1916, and was never heard from again.

In Color